QUESTIONS

ON THE

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

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QUESTIONS

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Old Testament Books

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BY

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

THIRD EDITION.

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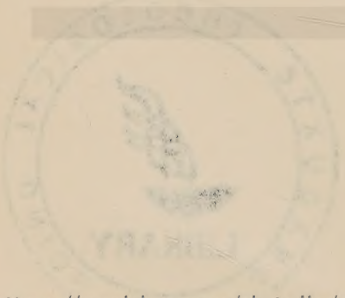

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INTRODUCTION.

These questions and answers were written for the most part on Saturday evenings for the following morning's use in Sunday-school,—those on each book generally at a time. Hence there is more repetition than if the whole set had been made at one cast. But, as we only learn by repetition, this hardly seems to me to be an objection. Little more is attempted than to give the chronological order of the books and a few of their most significant traits. The necessity for brevity and clearness has made modification to any great extent impossible, and it is only a rough form of truth that is expressed. Some modifications have been put in brackets, for the help of teachers, to be used at their discretion. Teachers in using the lessons can expand them to any extent, with the help of other manuals and critical studies. In our own Sunday-school we have used them only for general lessons, a few questions at a time; and this use accounts for the homeliness of certain questions and answers, it being my endeavor to interest children,—little and grown children at the same time. The range of doubt in regard to certain dates is considerable; and for this I have always made allowance, and, in general, have kept well within the limits of such careful scholarship as that of Professors Driver, Cheyne, and Toy. When I seem too conservative for the radical, the bias of Driver

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may be suspected; and when I seem too radical for the conservative, he must reckon with Professor Toy or Cheyne. The questions and answers were prepared without any thought of printing, and printed privately without any thought of publication; but they are not now published by the Unitarian Sunday-School Society without such advice as justifies the society in placing its imprint on my work.

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK.

BROOKLYN, N.Y.
Christmas, 1896.

THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS.

GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. Is the Bible a book or a collection of books?
Ans. A collection of books.

2. How is the collection divided?
Ans. Into the Old and New Testaments.

3. How many books in the Old Testament?
Ans. Thirty-nine.

4. How many in the New?
Ans. Twenty-seven.

5. That makes how many in all?
Ans. Sixty-six.

6. About how long were they being written?
Ans. About a thousand years.

7. In what language was the Old Testament written?
Ans. Hebrew.

8. In what the New?
Ans. Greek.

9. Did Jesus speak either Hebrew or Greek?
Ans. No: he spoke Aramaic.

10. Was this more like Hebrew or Greek?
Ans. It was more like Hebrew.

11. How much like it?
Ans. As much as English is like German.

12. Has any Christian Church a larger Bible than the Old and New Testaments?
Ans. Yes: the Roman Catholic.

13. What is the other part called by Protestants?
Ans. The Apocrypha.

14. What does this word mean?
Ans. Doubtful writings.

15. How do Protestants regard them?
Ans. Episcopalians and Lutherans as "profitable for instruction," but not as "inspired" in the same manner as the Old and New Testaments; Calvinists think even less of them, but Unitarians think some of them as truly inspired as the best parts of the Old and New Testaments, especially "The Wisdom of Solomon."

AMOS.

16. What whole book in the Bible was the first one written?
Ans. Amos. (Some noble fragments earlier.)

17. Is this the book that is printed first in the Bible?
Ans. No, it is not.

18. What book is printed first?
Ans. Genesis.

19. Were the books of the Bible collected all at one time?
Ans. No, they were not.

20. Were those of the Old Testament?
Ans. No.

21. How was the collection made?
Ans. Some books were collected and then others added, and so on.

22. What kind of a book is the Book of Amos?
Ans. A book of prophecy.

23. By whom was it written?
Ans. By the prophet Amos.

24. What do you mean by a prophet?

Ans. A preacher.

25. What did the prophets preach?

Ans. That the people should be faithful to their God.

26. What was the name of their God?

Ans. Yahweh.

27. Is their God called Yahweh in our English Bible?

Ans. No, he is not.

28. What is the name there?

Ans. Jehovah. (Oftener the substitute, Lord, or God.)

29. What is the difference?

Ans. Only a difference in spelling.

30. Why do scholars use the name Yahweh?

Ans. Because it comes nearer to the old Hebrew form.

31. Did the name Yahweh always stand for the same thought?

Ans. It did not.

32. How did the thought change?

Ans. It grew larger and better as time went on.

33. Who helped the most to make it do so?

Ans. The prophets.

34. Did the people always think that Yahweh was the only God?

Ans. They did not.

35. How about the prophets?

Ans. They did not think so either.

36. When did the prophets first begin to think so?

Ans. In the eighth century B.C.

37. Before that what did the people and the prophets think?

Ans. That there were many gods; but that Yahweh was the greatest.

38. Were the people quick or slow to learn the prophets' teaching that Yahweh was the only God?

Ans. They were very slow.

39. What did the prophets preach against most?

Ans. The worship of other gods than Yahweh, and the idolatrous worship of him.

40. And of what besides?

Ans. Luxury and the oppression of the poor.

41. Did the idolatrous worship end when the prophets taught that Yahweh was the only God?

Ans. No; it went on for a long time.

42. How long?

Ans. For two hundred years and more.

43. In what century did Amos live?

Ans. The eighth B.C.

44. Where did he prophesy?

Ans. In the northern kingdom.

45. By what name is that known?

Ans. Israel.

46. What was the name of the southern kingdom?

Ans. Judah.

47. Which kingdom was the larger?

Ans. Israel.

48. How many of the tribes belonged to it?

Ans. Eleven at first; nine afterward.

49. How many of the tribes belonged to the southern?

Ans. Two: Judah, which absorbed Simeon, and Benjamin.

50. Under what kings were all the tribes united in one kingdom?

Ans. Saul, David, and Solomon.

51. When did it split in two?

Ans. In the tenth century B.C., just after the death of Solomon.

52. Which was the stronger at first?

Ans. Israel.

53. Which is of more importance in the world's history?

Ans. Judah.

54. What names have come down to us from the name Judah?

Ans. Judea and Jew.

55. Why is Judah more important for us?

Ans. Because Israel was ruined by Assyria in the eighth century, before its religion had developed a literature.

56. What great power was the terror of both kingdoms in the eighth century?

Ans. Assyria.

57. What was its chief city?

Ans. Nineveh.

58. What was the employment of Amos?

Ans. He was herdsman of Tekoa and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.

59. Where was Tekoa?

Ans. In the southern kingdom.

60. In which kingdom did he prophesy?

Ans. In the northern.

61. How much did Amos know about Assyria?

Ans. Very little. It was just beginning to appear.

62. What regions did he expect most harm to come from?

Ans. Syria and Damascus.

63. What was the hope (Professor Toy would say interpolated in Amos and Hosea) that he and the other prophets cherished?

Ans. That the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel, would be again united.

64. And how far did this hope come to pass?

Ans. They were never again united.

HOSEA.

65. What book was written next after Amos?

Ans. Hosea.

66. By whom was the Book of Hosea written?

Ans. The prophet Hosea.

67. To which kingdom did he belong?

Ans. The northern.

68. What was the most interesting thing about him?

Ans. His great love and tenderness for his country.

69. What calamity did he expect for it?

Ans. Its invasion by Assyria.

70. This came, and with what result?

Ans. Its utter ruin in 722 B.C.

71. Under what Assyrian king?

Ans. Sargon.

72. What is the destruction of the northern kingdom commonly called?

Ans. The Captivity of the Ten Tribes.

73. Were they all carried away to Assyria?

Ans. No: only the leading families and the fighting men.

74. Did these ever come back?
Ans. No, they never did in a body.

ISAIAH.

75. What other great prophets in the eighth century B.C.?
Ans. Isaiah and Micah.

76. To which kingdom did they belong?
Ans. Both to the southern.

77. Which was the most famous of all the Hebrew prophets?
Ans. Isaiah.

78. How many chapters are there in the book called "Isaiah"?
Ans. Sixty-six.

79. How many of these did Isaiah write?
Ans. About one-third.

80. What part of the book is mainly his?
Ans. The first part, to the fortieth chapter.

81. Does that part contain chapters which he did not write?
Ans. It does; a good many, besides parts of others.

82. Who wrote the remaining twenty-seven chapters?
Ans. They were mostly written by some one two hundred years after Isaiah.

83. By whom?
Ans. We do not know.

84. What do we call him for convenience?
Ans. The Second Isaiah.

85. What other name also?
Ans. The Great Unknown.

86. Was he as great as the real Isaiah?
Ans. He was,— or even greater.

87. What book comes next in order after Hosea?
Ans. That of the real Isaiah.

88. What was his time?
Ans. The second half of the eighth century.

89. Who were then kings of Judah?
Ans. Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

90. What did Isaiah try to do?
Ans. To keep these kings faithful to Yahweh.

91. In what way?
Ans. By avoiding foreign alliances and worshipping only Yahweh.

92. Did he succeed?
Ans. Not altogether.

93. Why not?
Ans. Because Ahaz worshipped other gods than Yahweh and entered into an alliance with the Assyrians.

94. Did Hezekiah do any better?
Ans. He made the worship of Yahweh the only worship.

95. Did this good time last?
Ans. No: under Manasseh, the next king after Hezekiah, the worship of other gods was again common.

96. What things did Isaiah preach against?
Ans. The luxury of the rich and the oppression of the poor.

97. What kind of a prophet was he?
Ans. He was full of poetry and eloquence.

MICAH.

98. We have said that Micah belonged to the same time as the first Isaiah. About what time did Micah prophesy?

Ans. In the last years of the eighth century B.C.

99. What is his style of prophecy?

Ans. It is very similar to that of Isaiah.

100. What was the substance of his prophecy?

Ans. That great ruin would come upon the kingdom of Judah for its wickedness.

101. What is the most noble passage in the book?

Ans. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God?"

102. Did Micah write these words?

Ans. Probably not; they are in the sixth chapter, and this chapter and the next were probably written by some later prophet.

103. Why were they added to the first five chapters?

Ans. Perhaps to give the book a more cheerful ending.

NAHUM.

104. What book should stand in the Old Testament after Micah, if the books were properly arranged?

Ans. The Book of Nahum.

105. When was this written?

Ans. Probably soon after the middle of the seventh century B.C.

106. What is this book about?

Ans. About Assyria.

107. For what purpose?
Ans. To threaten its destruction.

108. Did this take place?
Ans. It did.

109. When?
Ans. 605 B.C.

110. Was Nahum's prophecy fulfilled?
Ans. Not literally, but yet remarkably.

111. Where is Nahum supposed to have lived?
Ans. Some think he was an Israelite captain living in Assyria; others that he lived in Judah.

112. Does any town in Galilee (the northern kingdom) bear his name?
Ans. Yes: Capernaum, which means the village of Nahum; but why so called we do not know.

ZEPHANIAH.

113. What book would come next to Nahum's if the Old Testament books were arranged according to the times when they were written?
Ans. Zephaniah.

114. About what time shall we place his book?
Ans. About 650 B.C.

115. What is it about?
Ans. The punishment of the sins of Judah.

116. And what besides?
Ans. The saving out of a remnant of faithful souls, who should enjoy the favor of God.

117. Is it about anything else?
Ans. The destruction of Assyria, the great enemy of Judah.

118. By whom?

Ans. It is not clear; but possibly the same Scythians, from whom Nahum expected it.

119. Did it come from them?

Ans. No, but from the Chaldeans.

120. Did the prosperity prophesied for Judah ever come?

Ans. No, it never did.

121. What prophet is Zephaniah most like?

Ans. The mournful Jeremiah, who began to write soon after his time. Perhaps he overlapped him.

122. What is the best thing in Zephaniah?

Ans. His ardor for the righteousness of Judah.

JEREMIAH.

123. What book of the Bible should come after Zephaniah in a right order?

Ans. Jeremiah.

124. How long a period does it cover?

Ans. About forty years.

125. From when till when?

Ans. From 626 to 586 B.C.

126. How does he rank among the known prophets of Judah?

Ans. He is the most famous after Isaiah.

127. What kind of a prophet was he?

Ans. Very sad and melancholy.

128. What word have we in common use that shows his character?

Ans. Jeremiad.

129. What is a Jeremiad?

Ans. Any very melancholy sermon or writing.

130. What was he always prophesying?

Ans. The destruction of Judah for her sins.

131. How did this sometimes make him seem unpatriotic?

Ans. By causing him to welcome the enemy as an instrument of Yahweh's punishment.

132. What do we admire most in him?

Ans. His unflinching courage.

133. What do we pity most?

Ans. His great sufferings, imprisonment, and misery.

134. What was his most famous prophecy?

Ans. That, after the fall of Jerusalem, the captives of Babylon would return in seventy years.

135. Did they do this?

Ans. They did not.

136. When did some return?

Ans. Sixty-one years after the fall of Jerusalem, when the first ten thousand were carried away.

137. When was the fall or taking of Jerusalem?

Ans. 597 B.C.

138. When was the destruction of Jerusalem?

Ans. 586 B.C.

139. Did Jeremiah write all the book ascribed to him?

Ans. Probably not the last three chapters,— fifty, fifty-one, and fifty-two.

140. Is there anything else besides the Book of Jeremiah commonly ascribed to him?

Ans. Yes: the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

141. But did he write them?

Ans. Quite certainly not.

142. What are they?

Ans. Five poems; five lamentations on the destruction of Jerusalem, written about 580 B.C.

143. What kind of poems?

Ans. Alphabetical acrostics.

144. What does that mean?

Ans. Every stanza begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, following the right order of the letters.

145. And how many stanzas are there?

Ans. As many as there are Hebrew letters.

146. How many is that?

Ans. Twenty-two.

147. What modern form of poetry have we, where strong emotion is expressed in a fixed form?

Ans. The sonnet; some of the sonnets of Milton, Wordsworth, Lowell, and Watson, are great examples.

DEUTERONOMY.

148. What famous book was written during the time of Jeremiah's preaching?

Ans. Deuteronomy.

149. When did it appear?

Ans. 621 B.C.

150. Where does this stand in our Bibles now?

Ans. It is the fifth book.

151. What are the first five called?

Ans. The Pentateuch.

152. What does this mean?

Ans. The five-fold book.

153. What other book have scholars now put with these?

Ans. The Book of Joshua.

154. And what do they call the six?

Ans. The Hexateuch.

155. What does this mean?

Ans. The six-fold book.

156. Why are the five or six grouped in this way?

Ans. Because they are for the most part a continuous history.

157. Was Deuteronomy the first book written of the six?

Ans. Yes, the first whole book.

158. What parts were written before?

Ans. The best story parts of the other books.

159. Which books are?

Ans. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

160. What are the story parts of these called by learned folks?

Ans. The Prophetic Narratives.

161. Why?

Ans. Because they were written by the prophets or men who looked at things in their way.

162. What does Deuteronomy mean?

Ans. The Second Law.

163. Why so called?

Ans. Because Moses is said to have given it forty years after he gave the law at the beginning of the desert wanderings.

164. But how long after Moses was it really written?

Ans. Seven hundred years after the exodus from Egypt which he led.

165. What was the date of that? And what does exodus mean?

Ans. 1320 B.C. Exodus means "the going out."

PROVERBS.

166. Have we any other book dating in whole or in part from about the time of Deuteronomy?

Ans. Yes, possibly,— the Book of Proverbs.

167. In whole or in part?

Ans. In part.

168. Which part?

Ans. The first nine chapters. (So think Cheyne and Driver, but Toy thinks much later.)

169. Was any part written before this?

Ans. Possibly the next twelve chapters.

170. Are there any other fragments besides these?

Ans. Six others.

171. Which of these is the most interesting?

Ans. The description of the good woman in the thirty-first chapter.

172. What has this been called?

Ans. The golden A B C for wives.

173. Why is it so called?

Ans. Because in the original it is an alphabetical poem, each verse beginning with a letter of the alphabet.

174. What other name was given to it by an old commentator?

Ans. The looking-glass for ladies.

175. Who wrote the Book of Proverbs?

Ans. Many different people.

176. Was Solomon one of these?

Ans. Certainly not; except as a few of the proverbs may have come from him or his time.

177. Can we be very certain that the oldest parts are as old as we have said?

Ans. No, we cannot.

178. Why?

Ans. Because some very learned men think that all the parts are post-exilic.

179. What does that mean?

Ans. After the exile to Babylon, which ended 536 B.C.

JOB.

180. What other book is possibly (Renan thinks probably) of the same period as Deuteronomy and Jeremiah?

Ans. The Book of Job.

181. Are we very certain of its date?

Ans. No, we are not.

182. What, then, do we know?

Ans. That it was not written until late in the seventh century or later. (Professor Toy says about 400 B.C.)

183. What was the belief formerly as to its date?

Ans. That it was written before the time of Moses.

184. To what body of literature does it belong?

Ans. To the Wisdom literature.

185. With what other books?

Ans. With Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

186. How does it rank with these?

Ans. Much higher.

187. And how in general among the Old Testament books?

Ans. For power and beauty it is the greatest of them all.

188. Who wrote the Book of Job?

Ans. We do not know.

189. Is the book a unit?

Ans. Probably not.

190. What have we then?

Ans. Probably four or five fragments.

191. What do we call it?

Ans. A Job literature, meaning a set of writings clustering about the name of Job.

192. What do we call the same kind of thing in Proverbs?

Ans. A Solomon literature.

193. And in the Psalms?

Ans. A David literature.

194. What does the greater part of the book consist of?

Ans. A dialogue between Job and his three friends.

195. What is it all about?

Ans. The sufferings and misfortunes of good men.

196. What is Job's part in the dialogue?

Ans. He insists that sufferings are not always the punishment of an evil life.

197. And his three friends?

Ans. They insist that they are.

198. With whom should we agree?

Ans. With Job.

199. Why?

Ans. Because we see good men suffering and bad men enjoying health and good fortune.

200. What is the teaching of Yahweh's part in the dialogue?

Ans. That we must, as Thackeray says, "bow before the awful Will and bear it with an honest heart."

HABAKKUK.

201. What prophets lived and prophesied in Jeremiah's later years?

Ans. Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Ezekiel.

202. Which was the earliest of these?

Ans. Habakkuk.

203. What was his time?

Ans. Near the end of the seventh century B.C.

204. How did he differ from Jeremiah?

Ans. He was more cheerful.

205. In what way?

Ans. He prophesied bad things for the Jews, but worse for their enemies.

206. What did Jeremiah probably think of him?

Ans. He probably placed him among the false prophets.

207. Why?

Ans. Because he was not so stern and harsh as himself.

OBADIAH.

208. At about what time did Obadiah prophesy?

Ans. Soon after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

209. How big a book is "Obadiah"?

Ans. Only one chapter.

210. What is it about?

Ans. The wickedness of the neighboring country of Edom.

211. In what did this wickedness consist?

Ans. In its rejoicing over the downfall of Jerusalem.

212. And what was the punishment of the Edomites to be?

Ans. The downfall of their country.

213. Did this come to pass?

Ans. Less dreadfully than the ruin of Judea.

214. And what happened that Obadiah would have detested?

Ans. Herod the Edomite (Idumean) became the King of the Jews.

215. Why did the Edomites hate the Jews so bitterly?

Ans. Because the Jews had treated them so cruelly.

216. Do we know anything about Obadiah apart from this little book?

Ans. No, we do not.

217. In what spirit was it written?

Ans. The spirit of hatred and revenge.

218. What good can it do us?

Ans. It can help us to see how hateful such a spirit is.

EZEKIEL.

219. What prophet much more famous than Habbakuk or Obadiah began to prophesy in Jeremiah's time?

Ans. Ezekiel.

220. What do we know about him?

Ans. That he was a priest of Jerusalem.

221. What else?

Ans. That he was a captive in Babylon.

222. When was he carried there?

Ans. In 597 B.C., when ten thousand were carried off.

223. When did he begin to prophesy?

Ans. In 592, according to his own account.

224. And how long did he prophesy?

Ans. Twenty-two years.

225. To what group of prophets does he belong?

Ans. The Major Prophets.

226. How many are there of these?

Ans. Four, including Daniel, who ought not to be classed among the prophets.

227. Which are the others?

Ans. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

228. Why are they called Major Prophets?

Ans. Not because they are more important than the others, but because their books are longer.

229. What is one very interesting thing about Ezekiel?

Ans. He wrote in a way that the writer of Daniel and others cared much for afterward.

230. Was Ezekiel the first to write in this way?

Ans. He was the first to write so to any great extent.

231. What do we call this way?

Ans. Apocalyptic.

232. What does this mean?

Ans. Showing the future in the form of visions.

233. What is the great example of this kind of writing in the Old Testament?

Ans. Daniel.

234. And in the New?

Ans. The Apocalypse or Book of Revelation.

235. What is another very interesting thing about Ezekiel?

Ans. We find in him the beginnings of the priestly legislation which afterward was fully carried out.

236. Was his plan for the rebuilding of the temple carried out?

Ans. It was not.

237. And why?

Ans. It was too big a plan.

238. How big?

Ans. Built as he prophesied, it would (some scholars think) have covered the whole area of the city; others think this estimate extravagant.

239. What books of the Bible besides Ezekiel were probably completed or written during the captivity?

Ans. Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Second Isaiah.

JUDGES.

240. What does the Book of Judges do?

Ans. It continues the history of the Book of Joshua.

241. In what does its greatest value consist?

Ans. In the grand old stories that are taken up into it from an earlier time.

242. What is one of them?

Ans. The story of Samson.

243. And another?

Ans. The story of Jael with the song of Deborah.

244. What shall we say of her rejoicing over the killing of Sisera by Jael?

Ans. That it is one of the most magnificent of barbarous poems.

245. Were the Judges judges in our sense of the word?

Ans. No, they were not.

246. What, then, were they?

Ans. Great fighting leaders of the people.

247. What idea do we get of the state of the country for two or three centuries between Joshua and Saul?

Ans. That it was given over to violence and crime.

248. What writer seems to have had a hand in compiling a large part of the Book of Judges?

Ans. The writer of Deuteronomy.

SAMUEL.

249. What other books have we already named as belonging to the time of the captivity?

Ans. The Books of Samuel.

250. Were they written by Samuel?

Ans. Certainly not.

251. How long after his time?

Ans. About five centuries.

252. Do we know who wrote the books?

Ans. We do not.

253. What was the author's object in writing?

Ans. To glorify Samuel and David at the expense of Saul.

254. Did he do Saul full justice?

Ans. He did not.

255. What did Saul do?

Ans. He made the several tribes into one nation.

256. Did the writer of the Books of Samuel, as we now have them, make them all up himself?

Ans. No: he used a great many old legends.

257. Which is the most beautiful of these?

Ans. That of Jonathan's death, and David's lament for him.

258. Who was Jonathan?

Ans. Saul's son and David's friend.

259. In what consists the main value of these books?

Ans. Read very carefully and cautiously, they teach us a great deal about the Hebrew monarchy.

260. And anything else?

Ans. Much about the religion of the time.

261. What was it at its best?

Ans. Monolatry.

262. Does that mean the same as Monotheism?

Ans. No, it does not.

263. What is the difference?

Ans. Monotheism is the belief in one God as the only God. Monolatry is the worship of one god in particular, without denying that others exist.

264. What text in the Old Testament exactly expresses this idea?

Ans. "Yahweh is a great God and a great king above all gods."

265. What books immediately follow the two books of Samuel in our English Bible?

Ans. The two Books of Kings.

KINGS.

266. How have the Jews classed these books?
Ans. Among "the early prophets."

267. And why?
Ans. Because there is so much about the early prophets in them, or because they were supposed to be written by prophets.

268. When were they written?
Ans. About the same time as the two Books of Samuel.

269. And when was that?
Ans. During the captivity.

270. In what century was that?
Ans. In the sixth century B.C.

271. Who wrote these books?
Ans. Some prophet, or some one who liked the prophets and their preaching very much.

272. What was his object in writing?
Ans. To show that only in the faithful service of Yahweh was there safety and success for kings and people.

273. How much time do the books cover?
Ans. About four centuries.

274. Are they trustworthy records?
Ans. More so than Samuel, but not altogether.

275. How do they probably err?
Ans. In a too flattering account of David and his successors in Jerusalem, and a too severe account of the kings of Israel.

SECOND ISAIAH.

276. When we were speaking of the prophet Isaiah in the eighth century B.C., what did we learn about the Book of Isaiah?

Ans. That only about one-third of it was written by him.

277. And where do we find this part?

Ans. Scattered through the first thirty-nine chapters. (Some parts of these were written before the time of the real Isaiah, and some as late or later than the last part of the book, chapters forty to sixty-six.)

278. When were the last chapters written, those from forty to sixty-six?

Ans. Some two centuries after the time of Isaiah.

279. Give the date as nearly as may be.

Ans. From 540 to 536 B.C.

280. How did this part get ascribed to Isaiah?

Ans. Because it was as grand and beautiful as Isaiah's writings and seemed like them.

281. Is it very grand and beautiful?

Ans. There is nothing more so.

282. What was it written for?

Ans. To prophesy the return of the captive Israelites to Jerusalem after the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus.

283. Did this take place?

Ans. After a fashion, but in no such splendid way as the prophet expected.

284. Do we know anything about this glorious prophet?

Ans. Nothing at all.

285. And so we sometimes call him — what?

Ans. The Great Unknown.

286. What is true about his thoughts of God and man?

Ans. They are (excepting the opening part of chapter sixty-three, which may not belong there) the highest and best in the Old Testament.

HAGGAI.

287. What book was written soon after the great prophecy of the restoration which we have in Isaiah forty to sixty-six?

Ans. The Book of the Prophet Haggai.

288. When was this written?

Ans. About 520 B.C.

289. And where?

Ans. In Jerusalem.

290. What had happened since the writing of the great second part of Isaiah?

Ans. Some of the captives had come back from Babylon.

291. What else?

Ans. They had begun to rebuild the temple.

292. And what else?

Ans. They had stopped work on it.

293. And what was Haggai's prophecy written for?

Ans. To encourage them to go on.

294. Was the new temple like the old one?

Ans. So different, that those who had seen the old one cried "For shame!"

295. How does Haggai rank among the prophets?
Ans. As one of the least strong and grand.

296. What people in our own time was he most like?
Ans. Those who care more for new churches than for old duties or new truth.

ZECHARIAH.

297. What other book was written about the same time as Haggai?
Ans. Zechariah.

298. All of it?
Ans. No, only the first eight chapters.

299. When were the other six written?
Ans. Probably long after.

300. What was Zechariah's purpose in writing?
Ans. The same as Haggai's.

301. And what was that?
Ans. To encourage the rebuilding of the temple.

302. What kind of writing is Zechariah's prophecy?
Ans. Apocalyptic.

303. What have we found that this big word means?
Ans. That the writer says what he has to say as if he were describing visions.

304. Give another meaning which the word itself implies.
Ans. An uncovering; that is, an uncovering of the future.

305. Where do we find the greatest piece of this kind of writing in the Old Testament?
Ans. In the Book of Daniel.

THE PSALMS.

306. We come now to the Book of Psalms. And why now?

Ans. Because few, if any of them, were written before this time (520 B.C.).

307. When were the most of them written?

Ans. During the three centuries following the return from the captivity.

308. And so the collection has been called — what?

Ans. The Hymn Book of the Second Temple.

309. Why?

Ans. Because so many of them were hymns that were used in the temple worship.

310. By what name are they more commonly called?

Ans. The Psalms of David.

311. Why?

Ans. Because the headings of seventy-three of them read, "A Psalm of David."

312. How many of them are there all told?

Ans. One hundred and fifty.

313. Why was it thought that David wrote them?

Ans. Because he was believed to have been very fond of music; to have played upon a psalter and to have written songs.

314. Why do learned people doubt that David wrote the Psalms ascribed to him?

Ans. Because they do not agree with the character of the man or his time.

315. For what other reason?

Ans. Because they were mostly written after the completion of the law.

316. And when was that?

Ans. In the fifth century.

317. How long after David?

Ans. Six hundred years.

318. How can we best describe the most of them?

Ans. As echoes of the Law in the hearts of the people.

319. What kind of writing are the Psalms?

Ans. Poetry.

320. Can we judge by our own English translation how good the poetry was in the Hebrew?

Ans. Yes, we can, pretty well.

321. And why?

Ans. Because Hebrew poetry had no rhymes and no definite metre.

322. What did it have?

Ans. It had rhythm.

323. What do we mean by that?

Ans. It was broken up into lines of nearly equal length.

324. Was this the only way of getting a poetical effect?

Ans. No, it was not.

325. Mention another.

Ans. The lines went in pairs (generally).

326. Give an example?

Ans. "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing."

327. What other way had the Jews of increasing the beauty of their poems?

Ans. They made the second line of the pair repeat the thought of the first, or somehow strengthen it.

328. Give an example of the repeating kind.

Ans. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

329. Give an example of another kind.

Ans. "His mouth was smooth as butter, but his heart was war."

330. What may we call lines of this sort?

Ans. Opposing lines.

331. And the repeating kind?

Ans. Parallel lines.

332. In what queer way were some of the Psalms written?

Ans. Each line began with a different letter of the alphabet, taking them in order.

333. Which is the great alphabet Psalm?

Ans. The one hundred and nineteenth.

334. How is this made?

Ans. It is a big Psalm made up of little ones: a separate little one for every letter in the alphabet.

335. Which of the Psalms is probably the most admired?

Ans. The twenty-third.

336. What is the first verse?

Ans. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

337. Name another short Psalm that is very beautiful.

Ans. The eighth.

338. What is the first verse?

Ans. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth."

339. Name another which is very grand.

Ans. The nineteenth.

340. How does it begin?
Ans. "The heavens declare the glory of God."

341. What is there strange about this Psalm?
Ans. It is made up of two, which were probably written in different centuries.

342. How does the second one begin?
Ans. "The law of the Lord is perfect."

343. Name another of the best.
Ans. The one hundred and thirty-ninth.

344. How does it begin?
Ans. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me."

345. Which is the great nature Psalm?
Ans. The one hundred and fourth.

346. How does it begin?
Ans. "Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, thou art very great."

THE PRIESTLY CODE.

347. What great addition was made to the Bible in the fifth century B.C.?
Ans. That part of the Hexateuch which is called the Priestly Code.

348. What is the Hexateuch?
Ans. The six-fold book,— The Pentateuch and Joshua.

349. And the Pentateuch?
Ans. The first five books of the Bible.

350. Which are?
Ans. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

351. But where does the Priestly Code come in?
Ans. It is made up of parts of all of the six books.

352. Where do we find the most of it?
Ans. In Numbers and Leviticus.

353. Where very little?
Ans. In Deuteronomy.

354. Why is it called the Priestly Code?
Ans. Because it contains a great deal about the office of the priests and their duties.

355. Where was it probably written?
Ans. In Babylon during and after the exile.

356. When was it published in Jerusalem?
Ans. In 445 B.C.

357. By whom?
Ans. Ezra.

358. Was the Hexateuch now complete?
Ans. Nearly, but not quite.

359. What scholar has done most to make this matter plain?
Ans. Abraham Kuenen, of Leyden, Holland.

360. What shall we say of him?
Ans. That he was one of the great discoverers, not the very first, of a great idea.

361. Why was his work so great?
Ans. Because it made the whole Old Testament better understood.

362. By whom, until quite recently, was the Pentateuch supposed to have been written?
Ans. By Moses.

363. How long after him did the Priestly Code appear?
Ans. Nearly nine hundred years,— eight hundred and seventy-five after the exodus in 1320.

364. Then the Pentateuch was how long in the making?

Ans. About four hundred years.

MALACHI.

365. What book of prophecy appeared, about the same time with the Priestly Code?

Ans. Malachi.

366. Where does this book stand in our Bible?

Ans. As the last of the prophets and the last book in the Old Testament.

367. But was Malachi the last of the prophets?

Ans. No.

368. Have we prophetic books in the Old Testament later than his?

Ans. Yes: Joel, Jonah, parts of Zechariah, and Daniel, which, strictly speaking, is not a book of prophecy.

369. What do we know about Malachi?

Ans. Nothing except what we learn from his book.

370. What does the name Malachi mean?

Ans. A messenger, and it may have been only the prophet's title, not his name.

371. What is the temper of his book?

Ans. Stern and harsh like that of Ezra and Nehemiah and the party which published the priestly code.

372. What were the three things he blamed the most?

Ans. The slackness of the priests in performing their duties, and of the people in paying their temple dues, and the intermarrying of the Jews with foreigners.

JONAH.

373. What very interesting little book was probably written later in the fifth century B.C.?

Ans. The Book of Jonah.

374. How does it differ from the books of prophecy with which it is wrongly classed?

Ans. It is all about a prophet; not by one.

375. What kind of a book is it?

Ans. A story-book written to teach a lesson.

376. What lesson?

Ans. That the heathen were not so bad as the Jews thought.

377. Any other?

Ans. That prophets should be more glad to have the heathen become good than to have their prophecies come true.

378. Why have many people thought less of the book than it deserves?

Ans. Because of the strange story of Jonah and the "great fish."

379. Does this story hurt the book?

Ans. Not for those who do not believe the story.

380. What shall we say of the book as a whole?

Ans. That it is one of the noblest of the Old Testament.

381. And why?

Ans. Because it teaches such noble and beautiful things about God.

382. What is there in the last verse that is very sweet and pleasant?

Ans. A kind word for the cattle.

RUTH.

383. What other book was written probably about the same time as "Jonah"?

Ans. The Book of Ruth.

384. What shall we call this book?

Ans. The idyl of the Old Testament.

385. What is an idyl?

Ans. A poem or poetic writing about country life.

386. For what object was "Ruth" written?

Ans For three objects.

387 Name one.

Ans. To give a pleasant account of King David's ancestry.

388. Another?

Ans. To show the kindness which a kinsman owes to a kinsman's family.

389. And a third?

Ans. To rebuke the narrowness of those who called it wicked for the Jews to marry heathen women.

390. How did it do this?

Ans. By showing that King David descended from a heathen woman,— Ruth.

391. In what does the value of this little book consist for us?

Ans. In its great beauty and its glimpses of a rich farmer's life in early times.

CHRONICLES, EZRA, AND NEHEMIAH.

392. What books of the Old Testament appeared about 300 B.C.?

Ans. Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

393. Were they always three books as now?

Ans. No: Ezra and Nehemiah were the closing parts of Chronicles.

394. What is most interesting in Ezra and Nehemiah?

Ans. Some parts which they wrote themselves; Ezra's the more doubtful.

395. When?

Ans. In the last part of the fifth century B.C.

396. What about?

Ans. Their own time, and the publication of the Priestly Code, and their endeavors to make the people keep its rules.

397. Why is this most interesting?

Ans. Because for fifty-nine years before 445 A.D. we know absolutely nothing.

398. What books are Chronicles most like?

Ans. Samuel and Kings.

399. What are they then?

Ans. Histories.

400. Are they good honest histories?

Ans. No, they are not.

401. And why not?

Ans. Because they were written to prove what was not true. (Perhaps embodying erroneous popular beliefs.)

402. And what was this?

Ans. That the temple service of the writer's time (post 300 B.C.) was of King David's making.

403. And what else?

Ans. That all the kings of Judah were faithful priests of this service.

404. Why did the writer try so hard to teach these untrue things?

Ans. Because he was a priest and wanted to make the priesthood seem something wonderful.

405. Are there any such people in our times?

Ans. Yes: those who have no eyes for anything wrong in their own church or their own party.

JOEL.

406. What other book was written about the time of Chronicles (a little sooner probably)?

Ans. The Book of Joel.

407. Has it always been ascribed to this late period?

Ans. No: it was formerly thought to be the earliest of the prophets.

408. And why has it been pushed ahead five centuries?

Ans. Because of things in it which show it to have been written after the Greek conquest of Judea.

409. Which was in what year?

Ans. 332 B.C.

410. How does it rank among the prophets?

Ans. Very high indeed.

411. What does it prophesy?

Ans. A revival of religion which will make all the people prophets.

ZECHARIAH IX.–XIV.

412. What part of a book belongs to the same time, and shows much of the same spirit?

Ans. Zechariah, chapters ix.–xiv.

413. How long after Zechariah i.–viii.?

Ans. About two centuries.

ESTHER.

414. What book was written soon after Joel and this piece of Zechariah?

Ans. The Book of Esther.

415. What is it about?

Ans. How Esther, a Jewess at the Persian Court, married the king, and saved her people from destruction.

416. Is the story a true one?

Ans. It is not believed to be by good scholars.

417. What was the book written for?

Ans. To explain the origin of a national feast,—the feast of Purim.

418. What is the spirit of the book?

Ans. It is full of national pride and hatred of the Persian conquerors of the Jews.

419. What is very strange about the book?

Ans. That it does not once contain the name of God.

420. What is the highest praise that we can give it?

Ans. That it is one of the best story-books in the Old Testament.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

421. What other book was written about the same time as Esther?

Ans. The Song of Solomon; also called "The Song of Songs."

422. Why was it called "The Song of Songs"?

Ans. Because it was thought to be very beautiful.

423. And is it so?
Ans. Most certainly.

424. Is it also a good book?
Ans. As good as it is beautiful.

425. What kind of a book is it?
Ans. A love story in verse.

426. What is its subject?
Ans. The faithfulness of a girl to her shepherd-lover, when a great king wished to marry her.

427. Who wrote it?
Ans. We do not know.

428. Who is said, in the first verse, to have written it?
Ans. King Solomon.

429. Why?
Ans. Because it was about him.

430. Was this a good reason?
Ans. No: but it was a common reason with the Jews; as in the case of Moses, Job, and Jonah.

ECCLESIASTES.

431. What famous book was written about 200 years B.C.?
Ans. Ecclesiastes.

432. What does this mean?
Ans. The preacher.

433. Did Solomon write it, as he is said to have done in the book?
Ans. He did not. It was written eight hundred years after his time.

434. What kind of a book is it?
Ans. A very sad and cheerless one.

435. Why so?

Ans. Because it has no faith in another life nor in this.

436. What does the writer teach about the value of life?

Ans. That it were better for us all never to have been born.

437. What is his favorite way of saying this?

Ans. "Vanity of vanities," saith the Preacher; "all is vanity."

438. How is the book written?

Ans. In a very beautiful way.

439. Has it good things for us?

Ans. Yes, many just, and shrewd, and noble sayings.

440. What must we think of the writer?

Ans. That he was very unhappy.

DANIEL.

441. What book of the Old Testament was the last written?

Ans. The Book of Daniel.

442. Did people always think so?

Ans. No: they thought it was written during the captivity of Babylon in the sixth century B.C.

443. And when was it written?

Ans. About 165 B.C.

444. What for?

Ans. To encourage the Jewish people to an heroic resistance to their oppressors.

445. How is this book written?

Ans. As a series of visions seen by the prophet Daniel in Babylon.

446. How do we know that it was written about 165 B.C.?

Ans. Partly because its language is the language of that time.

447. By any other sign?

Ans. Because its author knows about that time better than about any other.

448. Did he try to make people think that his book was written by Daniel in the sixth century B.C.?

Ans. He did, most probably.

449. And why?

Ans. Because he thought it would do more good if the people believed it was written by some prophet long before their day.

450. Should we not think it very wrong for any one to do so now?

Ans. Yes: and rightly so.

451. Did it seem wrong to the writer of the book?

Ans. Probably not.

452. How so?

Ans. Because people's ideas of right and wrong change in course of time.

453. Did not the prophets know what things were coming to pass in the far future?

Ans. No, they did not. Nor in the near future, except as shrewd men may know such things in our own time.

454. What was the great teaching of the prophets?

Ans. That wrong-doing brings misery and sorrow.

455. What shall we say of this teaching?

Ans. It stands fast until now, and will for all time.

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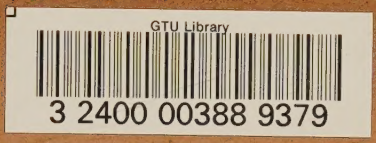

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